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PROLOGUE

Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager

Currently, advanced art education is in the process of developing (doctorate or PhD) research programs throughout Europe. Therefore, it seems to us urgent to explore what the term "research" actually means in the topical practice of art. After all, research as such is often understood as a method stemming from the alpha, beta, and gamma sciences directed towards knowledge production and the development of a certain scientific domain. How is artistic research connected with those types of scientific research, taking into account that the artistic domain so far has tended to continually exceed the parameters of knowledge management?

One could claim that the artistic field comprises the hermeneutic question of the humanities, the experimental method of the sciences, and the societal commitment of the social sciences. Will that knowledge influence the domain, the methodology, and the outcome of artistic research? Another major topic concerns not only the specificity of the object of knowledge of artistic research but above all whether and how artistic research and its institutional programs will influence topical visual art, its artworks and its exhibitions.

The former, more or less transcendental, questions have been posited in a preliminary workshop *Art and Method* in De Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten (State Academy of Visual Arts) in Amsterdam, where a number of philosophers and artists exchanged thoughts on the concept of research as such. In that framework, various topics arose, such as the meaning and position of research in both a scientific and an artistic context; how the different, and as yet, distinctive forms of research could be related, and what a research attitude would imply for the definition of the concept of an artist. Furthermore, the methodological consequences emerging from such a particular approach toward the artistic domain of knowledge were discussed further.

The results of the workshop were the launch pad for the international two-day symposium *Artistic Research* organized in co-operation with the European Cultural Institutes in the Netherlands (Maison Descartes, Goethe Institut, British Council, VCH De Brakke Grond, Instituto Cervantes, Istituto Italiana di Cultura, and the Finnish Cultural Institute), where similar methodological questions were addressed once more, albeit specifically focused on the institutional domain. These included: how could the developing research paradigm in topical visual art be part of the curriculum for advanced art institutions in Europe? And, vice

versa, how could an advanced art institution promote a progressive, artistic research paradigm? Would that be in the form of an institutional introspection? After a reformulation of the institutional framework? Or by an exploration and modification of existing teaching criteria and artists-in residence programs?

These complex problematics with their various points of view and management models are mapped out through the contributions of theorists, curators, and institutions, from Belgium, France, Great-Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Sweden. May these contributions be a constructive impetus for a versatile debate which may influence the future role of advanced art institutions and the position of artistic research in the next decade.

DISCOURS DE LA MÉTHODE

Henk Slager

Over the last decades, many art institutions have been stripped by deconstructivist zeal. In discussions, decisions, and actions, the aura of the modernist art museum dissolved, art itself lost its autonomy, and art history became revealed as ideology. However, one of the most significant bastions in the field, the art academy, the breeding ground for new artistic talent, succeeded for a long time in avoiding those phenomena. Thus, in many academies, the myth of the brilliant outsider, the individual as genius, could continue to be fostered far beyond the 1990s. And for that reason, it is indeed urgent now, as this conference claimed in its introductory statement, to critically reflect upon the position and role of the art school.

The first predominant question is directed towards the locality and function of artistic practice in our current postindustrial economic world. Isn't it true that the currently dominant culture of non-material production requires new types of artists, described by Negri and Hardt (*Empire*) as people flexible enough to organize their artistic activities ad hoc? Such artists produce work that can no longer be characterized and defined by mere medium-specific reflection. Based upon a critical and investigative attitude, they also search for novel media combinations and variable collaborations with different fields of knowledge. It is the task of advanced art education to adequately anticipate such significant developments. As a consequence, art education should break out of the (hermeneutic) paradigm of autonomous art. Departing from the current situation, it should, in fact, primarily focus on cultural preconditions, that is, the circumstances constituting topical visual art.

Today, reflection on the visual field and its students should primarily aim at "political, social, and media-related conditions," as Ute Meta Bauer puts it in *Education, Information, Entertainment* (Vienna, 2001). These components decisively determine the concepts and practices in art education. It turns out that, because of these variables, the concept of art is not a constant, essentialist given, but a phenomenon continuously affected by change and transformation. Therefore, artistic communication has to be regularly readjusted and reassessed. The modernist discourse, which disappeared along with art history, used to be the sole theoretical discourse tolerated within art education. However, that discourse proved unable to provide an adequate framework of concepts. Thus, in the 1990s, many new theoretical models emerged, such as media studies, cultural studies, and

curatorial studies, all disciplines more adequately accounting for the topical process of artistic communication.

In critical reflections on how to deploy these new models, the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York is particularly trendsetting. For more than twenty years now, it has encouraged critical study and theoretical inquiry into the practices, institutions, and discourses that constitute the field of culture. In this program, a continuous dialogue between artists, critics, and curators makes it "possible to question the categories and to experience the diverse approaches, which can call into question previous assumptions of authority about one's so-called domain." (Renee Green). This tripartite approach provides a setting within which participants engage in continuous discussions examining the historical, social, and intellectual conditions of artistic production. As a result of this, the Whitney Independent Study Program provides basic premises for each form of topical art education, i.e., a form of art education characterized by an unrelentingly researching attitude. A similar attitude seems to be decisive in how the various European institutes of higher art education and residence programs organize their research programs. Perhaps the most radical version of this is the Erban school in Nantes (France), where the participants in the Multipoint research group determine entirely on their own the form and content of their artistic research program.

In the Netherlands, a number of art schools seem to base graduate programs on a similar experimental curriculum - partly incited by the recently introduced BaMa structure. The Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam offers a truly intellectually challenging program. In thematic research projects, the program focuses particularly on notions such as context, site, situation, presentation, and interpretation, which implies that all aspects of the aesthetic process of communication - cultural studies, critical studies, and curatorial studies - are reviewed. In other Dutch graduate programs, however, one sees cooperations with the humanities departments in local universities. Take, for example, the MA program in Visual Art of the Frank Mohr Institute, in Groningen. In a seminar for both university and art school students, participants engage in developing ideas and strategies for the construction of a common discourse. Similar experiments occur at the Amsterdam Sandberg Institute - the MA program at the Rietveld Academy - in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam. Also the Amsterdam Rijksacademie - just like the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, a postgraduate program - focuses on a collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, albeit from a different perspective. The Rijksacademie curriculum emphasizes an individual research program by the students. Such research concentrates on artistic knowledge production, whereby relevant

academic disciplines are meant to help one arrive at a dialogue, a confrontation, or a collaboration.

However, some critical questions arise when examining these art school programs. Could one claim that these institutes, in collaborating with traditional universities, open their doors somehow for a calculating or formatting reason so characteristic for academic research? Is it possible anyway for artistic research to be comprised in a bookish, monorational research program?

With this question, we have reached a crucial premise of the *Artistic Research* conference. It is true, the conference's initial goal is to map various forms of artistic research. At the same time, though, it intends to lodge resistance to the possible danger of academic hegemony in the form of a metaphysical logic of a dominant system of knowledge. Particularly the Nordic institutes, such as the Helsinki School of Art and the Malmö School of Art, are aware of such academic threat. Therefore, they have organized their PhD programs outside of the structure of academic schools. Posing the theme of independence during a European symposium taking place in Maison Descartes is, I believe, more than a happy coincidence. After all, in spite of a metaphysics claiming universality and superiority in the then-intellectually progressive Netherlands, it was Descartes who dared to question the boundaries and possibilities of knowledge production. Also today, in discussing a "discours de la méthode" of artistic research, one need question the boundaries and possibilities of this form of knowledge production. In other words, what actually *is* the content of the research artists conduct? Put differently, how and to what extent does artistic research distinguish itself from forms of academic research? It seems to me that, ultimately, topical, artistic research cannot be strictly subsumed under traditional alpha, beta, and gamma domains. Strikingly, art is somehow involved in all of these fields: it is aware of the hermeneutic questions of humanities, it deploys the empirical method of the sciences, and it is also familiar with the commitment of the social sciences. With that, art's object of knowledge and its methodology seem to be defined. After all, "art as epistemological engine" (Sarat Maharaj, *Dokumenta 11* catalogue) continually succeeds in claiming a critical viewpoint on the different, the irregular, and the other while stressing the intrinsic tension between resemblance and difference, regularity and discrepancy, and the familiar and the unfamiliar.

It seems to me that such a research strategy could be specified as a differential iconography. A differential iconography reveals a world view which - partly due to the disruptive actions of the new media - no longer forms a transparent, monolithic unity. We cannot possibly escape relativity

and contingency. The awareness of heterogeneity requires that artistic research explicitly appeals to a tolerant, open attitude and multiple, interpretative models. Deploying phenomena such as cross-overs and found-footage, the perspective of the multiplicity and a poly-aesthetic attitude should always function as a regulating guideline. It is solely from these basic premises that artistic research is able to manifest itself as a meta-analytic activity, that is, as a critically novel reflection on the position of the artistic image in our topical visual culture. That is a form of research which withdraws the image from each possible one-dimensional anchorage such as, for example, the retinal rhetoric of the economic dictate.

With that, probably the sole methodological point of departure of artistic research has been formulated: a way of research aware of difference without implying any dominance by any discourse - the latter used to be the case in the days of the modernist iconography as we all know. The awareness of difference carries indeed the critical capacity for this kind of research. It implies the capacity to mobilize an open attitude, an intrinsic tolerance for a multiplicity of interpretations, and, if necessary, to put those into action against the spreading excesses of one-dimensional contextualizing.

In the present culture of acceleration and decay, the domain of freedom which art offers for a heterologous production of knowledge seems to be more important than ever. Therefore, artistic research needs a resolute, institutional emancipation. The graduate degree in visual arts should claim a specific context, similar to how technological graduate degrees have obtained their domain and their serious position in the academic world. That implies deploying an academic field of thought which - unlike traditional academic research and its categories - enables a situational approach. Such research is characterized, then, by transdisciplinarity, teamwork, collaboration, and interactivity. It takes up a domain which, mostly simultaneously, demands attention for an ongoing critical reflection about what visual art means as an experimental domain of freedom. Moreover, in order to prevent artistic research from becoming caught in the rigid networks of a homogeneous, scientific reason, it must be - analogous to the above described Whitney Program paradigm - methodologically related to the previously mentioned triad of studio-based work, critical studies, and curatorial studies. While studio-based work and critical studies mainly focus on the moment of production and the moment of reception of the work respectively, the perspective of curatorial studies draws the moment of situation and presentation into the discourse. With that, the turning point of metamorphosis, the actual moment of transformation, the opening up of multi-dimensional windows (as Annette Balkema would call

it), has arrived. The moment of situation and presentation seems to offer the ultimate moment of artistic communication, connectivity, and entanglement. Each artistic research project should grant, I believe, an important contribution to experimental exhibition models. With that we have reached another premise constituting the objective of the current symposium: the point of view of a number of curators who explicitly work in the context of exhibition paradigms determined by the perspective of artistic research. After all, and this brings us back to the starting point of this conference, it is only through research-based art related to the specific situation of the work, and the (contextual) conditions of presentation, that artists will be able to provide a critical, nondisciplinary contribution to the topical debate on knowledge.

WEBSITES

Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten

www.rijksakademie.nl

Jan van Eyck Academy

www.janvaneyck.nl

Malmö School of Art

www.khm.lu.se

Piet Zwart Institute

www.pzwart.wdka.hro.nl

Helsinki School of Art

www.kuva.fi

Gerrit Rietveld Academy

www.gerritrietveldacademie.nl

Sandberg Institute

www.sandberg.nl

Frank Mohr Institute

www.mohr-i.nl

Whitney Independent Study Program

www.whitney.org/programs/isp.shtml

Multipoint/Erban

www.multipoint.free.fr

Manifesta

www.manifesta.org

Arteleku

www.arteleku.net

WHAT IS THE POINT OF RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL STUDIES IN ART?

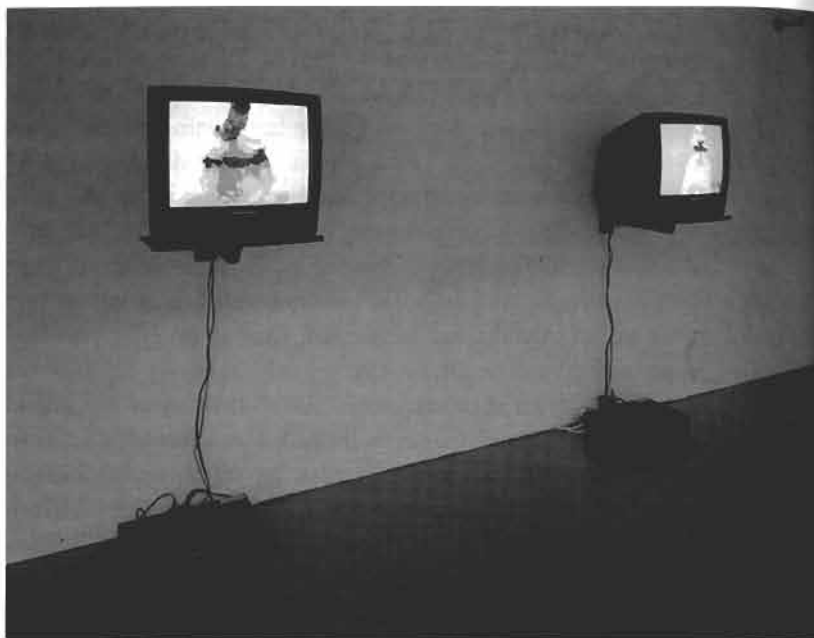
Jan Kaila

When I applied for a doctorate study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki in 1997, it was important to me that the Academy had a clear policy on visual art research. According to this policy, visual art research should be viewed as a coherent whole, the major components being the student's artistic work (artworks, exhibitions, etc.) and an investigation of the questions prompted by that artistic work.

I did not consider it of primary importance or relevance that artistic research should fulfil scientific criteria. Instead, I was interested in how the aesthetic and conceptual knowledge characteristic of the visual artist could be further developed and externalized in works and texts, or in other forms of reflection. By the knowledge characteristic of the visual artist, I mean the authorial space made up of actions, conceptual thinking and knowledge acquisition – the space within which the works are made. The causes that have given rise to this space may be logical, or they may be absurd and haphazard, but they are all relevant.

I decided at an early stage in my studies that the "demonstration of artistic skill and scholarship" that would earn me my doctorate (the Academy of Fine Arts does not require the production of a doctoral thesis) would consist of one or two exhibitions and two texts, one of which would be conversations and the other article-like appendices. The purpose of the conversations was to investigate fairly directly the origins and development of my works, while the appendices by revealing both the works of other artists and the theoretical texts underlying my work were also intended to link my research into a broader frame of reference within contemporary art. With this formal approach I was seeking to ensure that the "analytical section" of my research would be a credible reflection of my artistic practices.

The "subject" of my demonstration of artistic skill and scholarship was gradually refined during the years 1997-2000. When it came to naming this subject, it posed a problem since I did not work exclusively on a coherent set of problems associated with a specific place or phenomenon, but produced quite disparate works difficult to list under a single common concept or heading. Conversely, I was increasingly interested, both in practice and on a theoretical level, in what happens when a photographer adopts means of representation other than photographs. This had long been a preoccupation of mine – I had been juxtaposing a variety of



The Solarized, Video installation, three monitors with sound, 2000

materials and photographs in my exhibitions since the beginning of the 1990s. As my research progressed I was able to name the set of problems I was addressing using the concept of photographicality, by which in practice I meant the projection of artistic approaches characteristic of the photographer onto other means of representation. In a text that was one of the outcomes of my research I characterized my use of various media as follows: "The videos I have produced are not based on the mainstream tradition of using moving images, in which a traditional linear story is generated using cameras or camera-runs to shoot the subject from various directions, and by cutting or editing. In my videoworks, the camera is static like it is when taking photographs (with any motion resulting solely from the movements of the objects being filmed), and I edit them primarily to produce simultaneity, not linearity."

The use of three-dimensional objects is also intended to achieve photographicality: "I hope it evokes the contradiction between presentation and representation found in photographs, which arises from the way photographs refer to something that was already in existence elsewhere, while they simultaneously are themselves physically present "now". It is thus significant that I have brought in used clothes and books, in other words objects in which past time is visible."

Meanwhile, the texts I use in my works are reminiscent neither of traditional literature nor, in their absurdity, of ordinary conveying of information. By producing text panels that register things in a way that resembles documentary qualities typical of photography, I try to reflect the traditional meanings generated by the physical juxtaposition and superimposition of ordinary writing and photographs.

In 2000, I showed the "practice-based section" of my demonstration of artistic skill and scholarship research at the Amos Anderson Art Museum Helsinki, as an exhibition titled *Kohteen Mysteeri – Mystery of the Object*. The aim was to install works made out of photographs, clothes, soft toys, books, texts and videos as an integrated, albeit contradictory, whole, in a kind of dialogue between different materials and different informative contents.

The analytical section of my demonstration of artistic skill and scholarship was completed in its final form at the end of 2002 and was published together with a portfolio documenting the "Kohteen Mysteeri" exhibition as the book *Valokuvallisuus ja esittäminen nykytaiteessa – Teoksia vuosilta 1998-2000*. (Photographicality and Presentation / Representation in Contemporary Art. Works from 1998-2000)

I subsequently received my Doctorate in Fine Arts at the end of 2002 and since April 2003 I have been working as a substitute Professor in

the Department of Postgraduate Studies at the Academy. In the following, I consider some aspects of artistic research and artists' doctoral studies in the light of what I have learned and experienced.

With doctoral-level artistic research being such a fledgling field, it is difficult and questionable to reach wholesale conclusions that apply to the entire field. The main problems in doctoral studies nevertheless probably relate to the identity of artistic research – with how research is assessed, for instance, and how it is related to traditional (scientific) research. Can an artist's doctoral studies constitute a completely new form of research or is it a question of transplanting for artists' use models that work good in the sciences?

It is impossible to create a totally new form of research, since that would mean stepping outside of verbal language. In other words, artists' production and other things they do are always to some extent bound up, for example, with the tradition in art history, semiotics and aesthetics. It does not, however, follow that artists as researchers should plagiarize more traditional research as such, but rather that science traditions should be adapted to serve artists when they are studying their own activities and their own field as authors. Only thus, by using and at the same time breaking down existing familiar verbal means of articulation, can we gradually generate our own tradition. But generating our own tradition will take time, and requires that we be left to work in peace. Sometimes it feels like the very word "doctor" arouses needless, occasionally even comical passions, as well as unfounded expectations of something quite unprecedented appearing right away, right here and now.

Artistic research is also bound to a tradition external to itself because, so far, there are not that many Doctors of Fine Arts around. This being the case, we are in the paradoxical situation that a large portion of the educators, supervisors and examiners involved do not have practical experience in the way artistic research functions, but are basing their thinking on traditional research or, in the best case, on a vision of what artistic research might ultimately be. This problem has emerged clearly in the examination of demonstrations of artistic skill and artists' doctoral theses. Examiners representing different fields have often been capable of assessing, or have even sought to assess, only the practice-based section or only the writing (the written, analytical section), with the result that the goal of coherence set for the artistic research can, to the disappointment of the artist, break down and blur into the virtually mutually opposed components of practical production and analytical reflection.

Of what use then are doctors of fine arts? The question is as speculative and as broad as the one about the usefulness of art, but I will nevertheless try to make some observations on it.



To Turn Around, Installation, clothes, and 3-5 monitors showing DVD-loops, 2000

To Turn Around, Installation, soft toys and one video, 2000



What-Where-When, Installation, 320 books and 80 photographs, 1999

Now that many of the European institutions that educate artists have become universities, it would be odd if it were not possible to study there for both Master's and Bachelor's degrees, and for doctorates, as elsewhere in the university world. Or should we ask then: Why have an academic education at all to become an artist?

A much more difficult question relates to whether artistic research has something to contribute to artists or others interested in the subject, something that the already existing research, institutions or art world are unable to provide. I think it has. Artistic research at best involves going in depth into the special knowledge involved in artistic authorship and distributing it, both to the visual art field and possibly elsewhere, and only an investigative artist can do this. In practice, this distribution takes place via exhibitions, publications and teaching that result from artistic research.

In recent decades there has been a shift in the division of labor according to which the artist makes works, the curator curates and the writer criticizes. Contemporary art circles accommodate an increasing number of activities, in which artists are expected to display expanded authorship – the ability to verbalize, analyze and interpret their own and other artists' works, and other aspects of the art world. Nowadays, for many people, artistic authorship means making a commitment to projects and collaborative undertakings, organizing and doing other activities previously considered "extra-artistic." In this situation, the tradition of knowledge and speech that emerges in artistic research is crucially important, while staying mute likely leads to exclusion or even invisibility.

Note

The Academy of Fine Arts' Department of Postgraduate Studies was set up in 1997. In that same year six artists began their doctoral studies, two of them have already received their doctorates. During 1999-2003, a total of six new doctoral students were admitted. Every year, the Academy solicits applications for doctoral studies, accepting two or three new students.

RIVER LOW, MOUNTAIN HIGH. CONTEXTUALIZING ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Mika Hannula

1. Background

Artistic research is a new area. It is a field within university studies that deserves to be called social innovation. Due to its freshness and newness, artistic research is both a possibility and a risk. However, so far it has proven to have a fair chance of survival. Thus, artistic research must be articulated and formed according to its own particular needs and challenges.

Obviously, artistic research is an area which is yet to emerge as a full program. During the last 20 years, there have been different artistic research projects and experiments in various countries. However, there has not been enough internal scrutiny and definitely not enough fruitful comparison and constructive criticism among all the different approaches. (For a historical point of view, see Wallenstein 2002.) Since artistic research has been accepted and established as credible research within art education and art institutions, we have to keep its possibilities open and move towards a vision of artistic research which is self-critical and self-reflexive. Put differently, we must have the courage to be anarchistic and experimental.

What actually is artistic research? It is a combination of artistic practice and theoretical approach while aiming at the production of knowledge. Within that combination of theory and practice, I would like to argue, we need some kind of common ground not implying strict rules, but basic guidelines for a continuously shifting methodology of artistic research. Methodology is the semi-solid base and the framework enabling outreach and experimentation. It is there to guide and to help, not to restrict or to limit. I believe that without such methodology, artistic research as an interdisciplinary field could become lost.

Before going into the details of the basic methodological demands, requirements and possibilities, I would like to refer to a story that has functioned for me as a metaphor in reflecting on artistic research and theoretical approach and how they could be based on mutual respect and reciprocal recognition. It is a story I heard from a career diplomat, who took part in the historic peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt in 1976. The scene of the story is Camp David in the United States, where the final conversations between the two warring parties was mediated by American efforts. However, the depth of misunderstanding and suspicion had become so profound that it took six so-called "walks in the woods"

before the deal could be closed. "A walk in the woods" is a common term in international politics. It refers to when both parties and the mediator call for a short break, during which the main negotiators of each party step outside the room or outside the tent, as was the case during this particular event. Then, symbolically, they go for "a walk in the woods" in order to prevent loss of face and have an informal exchange of thought. During the final phase of the peace talks, negotiations stopped six times before all parties could agree with the content and the rhetorics of the deal.

It seems to me that combining artistic practice and theoretical strategy is like negotiating a peace agreement. Not in the sense of solving all the problems, but in the sense of reaching a compromise the parties involved can live with. As we all know, these deals are extremely difficult to reach and even more difficult to implement and to hold on to. They demand an incredible amount of commitment, time and energy in a process where both sides have to move carefully, smoothly and slowly, since collisions are bound to happen. At the same time, both parties must be willing to step out of their *Weltanschauung*, and question and doubt it. In line with Curtis Mayfield, one could say that one has to give in order to get, one must be prepared to lose in order to gain.

2. Methodological Questions

Individual Level

In Finland as elsewhere, artistic research is in a process of development, seeking its own particular field and methods. Therefore, we must accept its procedural nature, including its failures, mistakes and erroneous assessments. Instead of presenting a finished package, I shall try to bring out the necessary preconditions of the activity called research – whether it be social, political or artistic. One should note that the observations are fairly general and always insufficient. Only detailed knowledge of and familiarity with the practice and subject matter of a particular research project offer an opportunity for the clarification of local and detailed methodologies.

The fundamental impetus of all research must perforce be communication: the desire to say something about something to someone. Preconditions always arise from the fact that the researcher and the text he or she produces is part of their environment, part of their world, on which they have an impact and which influences them in turn. It is important to bring out, with maximum openness and clarity, who researches, and why and what is being researched. That is a method different from merely listing distinct rules to produce the desired result. The method itself should remain flexible and evolve over the course of the investigation.

An "umbrella" concept for artistic research could be a "method-

ological map of reflection" telling both the author of the research as well as its readers how, why and where the research has progressed. Such a map seeks to bring out the premises, progress and final result of the research, not in the form of a straightforward answer, but as the presentation of novel questions and a tentative, yet courageous, unraveling of failures. It seems to me that the fundamentals of artistic research must include at least the following six points. (See Hannula 2002)

1) Thorough exposition of research matter, premises, and motives.

The researcher must explain what and why he or she is researching, its interest, and its purpose. The success or failure of an artistic research project is largely dependent on how carefully and meticulously this first step is planned and implemented. At this stage, the researcher should explain why the research is undertaken within the realm of contemporary art rather than in art history, or, for example, a field such as sociology. This first step sets off the rules of conduct for the chosen mode of research, while it seeks to discover what autonomous and meaningful artistic research is. That cannot be done without a fearless distance from earlier viewpoints and the courage to create novel modes and fields of research. Remember, research does not take place in isolation: close interaction with the research community is of utmost importance.

Obviously, trudging through untrodden snow is difficult and seldom elegant. However, there is no other alternative. Artistic research is both a risk and an opportunity, since the field has no tradition or codes of its own. Sometimes the rules of research from neighboring fields seem indisputable. But of course, they are not. We must keep in mind that only thirty years ago researchers were earnestly arguing whether or not sociology should be considered a science. Nevertheless, the scientific validity of most disciplines are accepted as given. The question of validity is posed if the status of the discipline is uncertain, i.e., when it is still developing. That uncertainty of artistic research must be endured and accepted since it will not be resolved within the next five or perhaps even ten years. The discipline's profile and tradition will only emerge – if ever – after the work of a few generations.

2) Exposition of inherent premises in research subject and approach.

Point one implies that research is contextualized and linked with earlier writings and research. Although the tradition of artistic research itself is young, one should recall that, particularly during the 20th century, many artists have produced texts, statements, and views on their work. Thus, artistic research could refer to how and why artists have investigated their

work in the past and, at the same time, develop such investigations further. Artistic research is situated, then, within a certain critical continuum, where it seeks to attain a locality of interpretation.

3) Appropriation of research tools and subject.

First of all, one must demonstrate adequately how and why one has selected the tools in question, if necessary, in connection with previous use. In addition, the artistic researcher must show how her or his research viewpoint differs from research in other fields such as, for example, philosophy or art education. Appropriation of tools and subject is only possible if one is capable of justifying them in relation to earlier propositions and claims.

4) Artistic research must follow the classic modes of presentation of written research.

One must present one's research with consistency, honesty, and precision, i.e. as elegantly, carefully, and systematically as possible. Artistic research - inevitably subjective - contains the danger of either turning into narcissism or ending up in an uninteresting "cul-de-sac." Subjective experience coupled with a generally accepted linguistic expression could result in innovative and independent perspectives and become described as artistic research without restraint.

5) Assessment of final result.

Towards the end of the methodological map of reflection, it is necessary to summarize the experiences which have emerged during the process. Clearly, artistic research cannot and must not provide absolute answers, but search for novel viewpoints of and connections with various themes. Questions and problems emerging during the research process must be presented in the final result as background for further investigation. Most importantly, the researcher must be able to report on the research process and present an opinion on both the research topic and its premises. In other words, he or she must take a stance and support it with arguments.

6) Reformulation of research practices of artistic research; evaluating criteria of adequacy.

The field of artistic research is not only relatively new to its practitioners. It is also quite novel to its readers and critics. Therefore, the demands and conditions presented earlier apply with equal force to anyone operating in the field of artistic research. This calls for flexibility and a willingness to discover new criteria and opportunities in the field of artistic research.

Institutional level

The perspective of individual agents needs to be expanded with an institutional point of view. Artistic research has been conducted at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki since 1997. Our experience is that the institution behind artistic research programs should focus at least on the following five points.

- 1) Create a platform for open artistic research allowing a broad type of interdisciplinary collaboration.
- 2) Provide room for taking risks, experimental styles and approaches, and creative uncertainty and failures. Avoid closing down possible horizons and frameworks with regard to research activities. What artistic research needs is institutional integrity and an institutional desire to be anarchistic, tolerant and open.
- 3) Encourage students to collaborate within the group, to question presuppositions, and to discuss the basics of doing research. Attempt to answer questions of what it means and why it is important to combine artistic activities with research.
- 4) Clearly articulate the aims and interests of the institution. In our academy, there is no scientific PhD available. We have a specific artistic PhD based on its own objectives, interests and criteria. This helps to structurally avoid misunderstandings, false comparisons and undue expectations.
- 5) Have faith in the course chosen, trust taking risks, keep the process open and self-reflexive. The practice of artistic research must develop itself. That will inevitably take time. It requires negotiations, continuously balancing and searching, and the creation of a common ground based on mutual recognition and respect. That implies the ability to unconditionally listen and criticize.

There are two kinds of danger in collective activities within research groups. On the one hand, too much homogeneity where everything is accepted, but not debated. And, on the other hand, too much heterogeneity without a common basis for discourse, without a shared language or common goal. Both problems can be dealt with by addressing the need to find proper rhetorical and analytical tools in each individual case and project of artistic research. A lack of such tools is common in research areas without a long tradition. (For other methodological approaches, see Vadén 2002, and Varto 2002.)

Questions of validity

The starting point is qualitative research grounded on the belief that any

kind of research is done by a subject, whose subjectivity is not a problem, but rather an important part of the research. In fact, the researcher is a core element in the research activity, aiming for comprehension instead of measurable results. One should acknowledge that research results become communicated in a personal style, enabling an open and transparent interpretation. However, there are important points to be clarified in order to be able to hold on to the communicative aspect of artistic research. Again, these points are not meant as limitations, but as guidelines in the process of articulating one's project and its result.

- 1) Explain the context and articulate precisely the theme of the research. What is it about, what is the problem, and what does it expect to achieve and why?
- 2) Credibility and communication: research has to be conducted and communicated as transparently as possible, even if the research is based on intuition or artistic activity.
- 3) Coherence of research and how it is reported.
- 4) The adaptability and uniqueness of the results should be located and argued for.
- 5) The importance of the results for the research field and community should be stated.

As a concluding remark on questions of methodology and validity of research, I would like to argue that we have to approach artistic research, in fact, any kind of research, with a healthy dose of both respect and skepticism. Artistic research should not be worshipped nor ridiculed, since it is simply a way to think through one's work and its context. What is produced is a critical and self-reflexive activity, attempting to locate itself within a certain part of contemporary art and its discourse.

3. Possibilities of Open and Critical Research

In a broader perspective, artistic research seems to be able to introduce methodological anarchism and experimentation. It is driven by a communicative impulse while opening up various forms of interdisciplinarity. From the view of methodological anarchism (following the credo and legacy of Feyerabend, see, for example, Feyerabend 1995) and experimentation, artistic research has two specific characteristics. Firstly, conscious scrutiny and reflection of the relationship between experience and research. That implies:

- a) strong awareness of the relationship of the researcher with his/her object or theme of research; interpretation and situation in a given context.
- b) articulation of presuppositions.

c) research as a gradually emerging process; reflection on the object of research and its surrounding context.

The second characteristic deals with how to maintain and protect the uniqueness of experience. That could be labeled experiential democracy, implying that a) all activities are interwoven within language and the production of meaning; b) communication should keep its uniqueness, but still be accountable and reachable.

What is experiential democracy? According to Tere Vadén (2003), its driving force is to oppose the either/or scheme of binary logics. It relies on two principles which cannot be overridden. The first principle claims that everything can be questioned, while the second one argues that the uniqueness of any kind of experience has to be respected and treated on its own terms. This leads to the basic definition of experiential democracy, maintaining that all areas of experience are equal. Therefore, all areas of experience can be criticized by other areas of experience. In other words, art can criticize science and science can criticize art. As a result, openness and critique will increase, while a critical attitude moving in various directions will push forward novel interpretations and points of view.

At the same time, we should be aware of the danger in artistic research. The idea of equality of experience is completely forgotten when an artist first creates a painting, an installation or performance and then sets out to scrutinize it. That would be a case of dividing up the practical and theoretical sides of artistic research when in fact both sides need to bounce into each other and link in a genuine encounter. I would like to argue that is exactly what artistic research is. Artistic research is that interaction, where the two sides of practice and theory shape and shake each other. From this, a number of questions emerge. How does artistic research affect theoretical approaches and conceptualization? How do theoretical strategies affect artistic production? How does a theoretical approach participate in the process of the production of artistic meaning? What happens in the interstitial space of the encounter between practice and theory?

The Ethics of Encounter

Why emphasize the term encounter? I believe it refers to the clashing or colliding of two worlds. That does not imply a conflict or fight, but an element of incomparability within the two positions which both deserve respect and recognition. An encounter does not look for consensus, but rather a reasonable disagreement, as John Rawls put it. (See, for example, Rawls 1993) In this respect, I would like to connect critical hermeneutics with artistic research, where hermeneutics is not considered a philosophy, but an approach and an attitude. Hermeneutics is not restrictive, but strives

for openness through interpretation. Rather than providing answers, it examines the sensibility of questions, integrates research and tradition, and produces new visions. Hermeneutics implies not only awareness of interpretation, but also where and how interpretation occurs. In that sense, I believe, hermeneutics is a collision waiting to happen, of which we suddenly become aware. Hermeneutics is always there, but we often fail to see or acknowledge it.

Thus, interpretation is an idiosyncratic process of checking and balancing. That feature can be found in Gianni Vattimo's work. For Vattimo, the main characteristic of interpretation is the chance of failure. Furthermore, interpretation never ends: it opens up the richness of being through the possibility of alternatives. The task of the interpreter is to take a stand and to locate arguments within the discourse – otherwise interpretation is irrelevant and unethical. "An interpretation is not a description by an 'impartial' observer, but a dialogic event, where the talkers participate equally and from which they leave changed; they understand each other to the extent they are both included in the third horizon, which belongs to neither, but where they have been placed and which puts them in their place," says Vattimo (Vattimo 1999, 20)

One should be aware of and accept the historicity of interpretation, and place approaches within the context of the past, since the past is ever present in the situation of the here and now. We should not denounce the tradition and development of forms of thinking, but seek a constructive and critical attitude. What is important is to bring out the conditions and requirements established by the interpreter and the situation. We are always simultaneously inside the world - part of it - yet seeking distance and perspective. That situation could be termed double-awareness. The nature of such awareness has been described by Juha Varto: "Things happen to me and I myself am happening, but there is no way to step outside, to place oneself further off, to see more clearly, to be wiser. I can only exist, in the way typical of human beings: in the middle, putting things in place, foundering". (Varto 2000, 38)

It is historicity and locality themselves which remove the danger of relativity with which hermeneutics is all too hastily branded. An interpretation conscious of its own premises and directions is the very opposite of a situation where anything goes. It is true that a hermeneutic approach requires a multiplicity of narratives and versions of reality. This, however, does not and must not mean that all versions are equally important. Rather, it leads to comparison and competition between versions. In the last analysis, the issue is which versions are supported and why.

The hermeneutic approach emphasizes our being-in-the-world.

What basic principles does the hermeneutic approach offer and postulate for the ethical encounter of being-in-the-world? Our relationship to ourselves and to the external world can be summarized in two strategies: to listen and to criticize. Inevitably, such a relationship is based on mutual interaction and, above all, by revealing oneself, by listening to what the other wants and tries to say.

In other words, the responsibility rests initially with the recipient, even though it is preceded by and impossible without the desire of communication by an other. Such a relationship is profoundly characterized by contextual and personal detail. On the level of visual art, encounter and interaction can be described as being touched in front of the work together with the work. Obviously, there is an endless need to present one's point or one's version of reality. Who has the stamina and time, though, to listen endlessly?

However, a successful encounter could signal the beginning of the journey we call dialogue. It is a process of becoming, which, as Gadamer put it, "forces us to linger and offers an opportunity for participation." A dialogue is a continuous process of "distancing and emerging, lingering and progress, but also movement side by side, alternate." (Gadamer 2000, 43)

The fundamental value of the critical hermeneutic stance can be crystallized in the principle of nonviolence and the message of love. (See, for example, Hannula 2001) Nonviolence is connected with an epistemological situation, without an objective way to distinguish between a correct or a faulty interpretation in a universal sense. Since there is no single, generally accepted way, something else is needed. In the position adopted here, that means that discussion must take place without resorting to violence. In other words, the only arguments allowed are verbal ones.

If we really intend to face such tasks, I believe we all will need help in a situation on the verge of collapsing. In order to maintain the process as open-ended, constructive and as nonviolent as possible, we need to rely on something which can provide us with a rule of thumb while joining two unique experiences together in a spirit of mutual respect and recognition. What do we need "to keep on keeping on", to paraphrase Curtis Mayfield again? That could be the message of love one finds, among other sources, in the New Testament. Curtis no doubt took up the words from Luke (6:31), "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

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IS ARTISTIC RESEARCH A MEANINGFUL CONCEPT?

Tuomas Nevanlinna

I work at the Helsinki Academy of Fine Arts. My job, along with Professor Jan Kaila at the Department of Postgraduate Studies, is to organize the philosophical and theoretical workshops that form part of the course of study. I have no formal decision-making power on the structure of or criteria for doctoral studies, although I certainly have something to say about their content.

To begin with, a few words about the structure of the doctoral studies. At the Academy of Fine Arts the PhD degree is not a substitute for some pre-existing studio-based, quasi-residential system. The degree is simply an additional opportunity for artists who already have a career and who continue working with their own projects during the program. It should also be added that the school does not, at the moment at least, give grants to these students.

The studies mostly consist of artists gathering together and discussing their work with colleagues. Then we have visiting speakers. Students are also required to write essays which are both edifying and help the artists in the ever-difficult process of writing.

Our program is certainly "school-like" in the sense that it requires or demands something from the artists. Otherwise it would not be a degree. Do we need degrees, then? As an option, yes, but not as a universal model – no one wants art schools to be "the same everywhere".

Still I would like to point out that the so-called freedom of studio-based, no-curriculum art schooling is in many senses only apparent. One danger involved is this: while there is no agenda or any requirements on the part of the academy, as long as there is evaluation (otherwise it wouldn't be an academy at all, would it, just a residence?), this freedom is directly subject to the *star system*. Nothing is demanded, yet on the other hand no possibility for a suspension, no open space, is left between the artist and the curators. The academy runs the risk of becoming an incubator built to meet the needs of star-seekers. This is analogous to neoliberal thinking: liberals want to get rid of all mediating communities and other horizontal relations oppressing the individual. The consequence is that the individual is subjected directly to the state, with no intermediate levels.

In this sense I see our program as being more free, because it offers a space which does not directly submit to the trends and currents of the art market.

I think, furthermore, that overreacting against curricula and educational demands is in many cases just a symptom of an inverted *faith* in the academy, a belief in its negative omnipotence.

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In its original administrative embodiment, the idea of doctoral degrees probably embraced the notion that the easiest way of improving the status and esteem of art education would be to remodel it according to the structure and terminology of science education.

Well, does artistic research,¹⁰ then, imply a scientification of art education at the expense of the "essence" of art – whatever that may be? Is there any point in modelling the instruction in art academies on that of universities? Might there not be an underlying assumption that art studies and education are more important and high-class the more akin they become to "science"? ¹¹

The more populist sceptics of artistic research will most likely suspect that this restructuring is yet another manifestation of the "crisis of contemporary art." Because art these days often lacks the kind of economic dimension that would attract wider audiences, it artificially invents all sorts of supposedly grand things (such as "conceptual art", "artistic research" and other pseudo-scientific cover-ups) to justify its activities. Is an artist not first and foremost a craftsman who "needs no theory"?

Transplanting the terminology of a science policy rife with "doctoral theses", "dissertations" and "research" into another context is not and cannot be an innocent, value-free process. This is a risk that should be avoided. And it would perhaps have been better if new terminology had been created for postgraduate degrees in the arts.

Nevertheless, and this is the most important point, the idea of artistic research also opens up opportunities and possibilities. That is to say, I am not writing the issue off as an administrative necessity or as a rhetorical-tactical mask assumed merely for the purpose of acquiring additional funding.

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In the following I will outline one possible way of approaching the nature of artistic research.

At least since Romanticism, art has had a reflexive relationship with itself and its tradition. Ever since, works of art have always posed explicit or implicit questions like: "What is art?", "Is this still art?", "What is the essence and what are the limits of my artistic medium?" and so forth.

One intuition is that, because art is necessarily "vague" and allows multiple interpretations, unlike the exact natural sciences, the model for artistic research should be sought in the humanities: following this example, artistic research would consist of free yet informed and analytical prose that communicates systematically with its sources.

This is, in fact, the way that perhaps the great majority of the work completed under the title of "artistic research" has been done. We can, however, attempt a further clarification.

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First of all, we should keep in mind the way that in artistic research the artist in question investigates her own works or, rather, *through* her own works.

The danger here is twofold: with regard to the method used in the research, the artist may either "objectify" his works or "subjectify" them. In the first case, she investigates her works as if she were not their author at all. This line of work is a kind of art history in the present tense. In the second case he reflects upon them from an uninhibited first-person perspective. This latter approach does not necessarily bother itself with the "logic" of the works, it simply adds a kind of human-interest viewpoint to them.

Although I find both these alternatives troubling, that does not mean that the artist's self-understanding should be completely "bracketed" or suspended during the process of artistic research. The symbolic world the artist dwells in is, of course, part and parcel of the work she is doing. The point is rather that this self-understanding should be subject to *testing*.

In this respect artistic research could, after all, take its cue from the natural sciences, at least in their *experimental* dimension. Does the art work (or a series of them) not occupy a position analogous to that of an experiment? The works offer a way by which the artist can seek an answer to some question. At the end of the research, conclusions are presented: How is the original question to be answered now, in the light of the "experiment" constituted by the work and works?

The question may, for example, be: "How does the place of performance, 'the space' in which it is given, affect a theatrical performance?" This might be studied by producing different kinds of performances and by examining and writing about the experiences they yield.

From this point of view it could be said that in artistic research truth "happens" in a singular and interpretative mode instead of in a general and exact mode. To put it rather crudely: mathematics is exact, general, and non-experimental. Theoretical physics is exact, general and experi-

mental. Textual/hermeneutical research in the humanities is interpretative, particular and non-experimental. Could artistic research, then, not be thought of as interpretative, singular and experimental?

Thus, artistic research might preliminarily be understood as a kind of *experimental hermeneutics*. The point is not that this scheme should be written down as a definition, criterion or "metanarrative" for artistic research. I am merely trying to situate it, sketch its original possibilities, mark out artistic research as something which denotes something particular [specific] and meaningful.

The very thing that renders statistics uninteresting may make artistic research interesting: "When this or that was done or asked at such and such a place, these particular results were obtained." But, even if artistic research were experimental in this sense, it would not be "empirical", in so far as empirical knowledge aims, through induction, at the general. Perhaps artistic research is "aesthetic research" in a somewhat similar sense to the way the inventor of the term "aesthetics", Alexander Baumgarten, saw it in the 18th century: aesthetic knowledge is knowledge about *the singular*. It cannot be generalized into laws in itself, and it applies only to the unique, but it is knowledge nevertheless and makes truth "happen" in a singular way.

Maybe artistic research constitutes *a-knowledge* – where the "a" can be freely seen either as an article or as a privative particle, or both.

Notes

1. In Finnish, the word "tutkimus" ("research") also includes the meanings "investigation" and "examination".
2. This "prestige" of science is an ambivalent issue, however. Sarat Maharaj has pointed out that not only have the arts been "scientificized", but the sciences also "artsified". Maharaj refers to Feyerabend in this context, but could an analogous point not be made about Kuhn's famous scientific revolutions? What do they exemplify, if not the "historicity of genius" (envisaged by Kant as applying to the arts, but not to sciences) transferred to the context of science? (Cf. Vattimo, Gianni: *The End of Modernity* (Polity Press 1984)).

Another question could be: Has science also snatched from art some of its "aura", its *greatness* (I refer here, of course, to the romantic notion of Great Art)? Is it not the case today that *science*, emphatically and instead of art, opens up the wondrous visions which we barely understand, but which are known to constitute the truth of the visible? In this sense it could even be said that if science is lending prestige to the arts, maybe the latter is simply getting its own historical prestige back in the process.

THE UK FINE ART PHD AND RESEARCH IN ART & DESIGN

Richard Woodfield

The UK government is in the process of reorganising the structure of Higher Education and there is a prospect of there being a distinction between 'research-led' and 'teaching only' institutions. At the same time, it has recently recognised that research is underdeveloped in the Art & Design sector and has offered a measure of protection for it over the next three years. As I will explain, future prospects are bleak but it would be useful to back track to the 60s, when the movement towards our future really started.

The story starts, in the early 60s, with the invention of the Dip.AD, which was intended to be the arts school equivalent of the university degree. It allowed for greater specialisation in the sector with diplomas being awarded in fine art and all the other design practices. Courses would be required to include 20% of study devoted to Complementary Studies including the history of art and design and that was what guaranteed them their degree status. Art historians were recruited from traditional university art history departments and in my own college, the then Nottingham College of Art and Design, they taught classical, medieval, renaissance and 19th & 20th century art history. I was recruited to teach the social history of art and later went on to organise a full-blown range of studies including art theory, child environment, drama, film studies, folk studies, literature, local history, music (taught by Michael Nyman), psychology, sociology, television studies and town and country planning. When the government started to radically increase student numbers and decrease the budgets for higher education, complementary studies was gradually phased out and then, finally, art history went as well. In the meanwhile Dip.ADs were changed into degrees and there still has to be 20% 'academic' study to justify the degree status. The logic of the early Dip.AD in Fine Art was fairly clear. The possession of the diploma meant that its holder could take up a career in teaching art as a specialist subject in secondary schools and could well be expected to offer art history to 'A' level. The current logic is equally simple: 'academic' subjects offer transferable skills that will offer the graduate a reasonably sophisticated level of communicative competency along with a sense of the location of the subject in the intellectual sphere.

With the emergence of the Dip.AD also later followed a small number of Masters courses to complement the ARCA (Associateship of the Royal College of Art) and the Slade postgraduate diploma. Typically stu-

dents went on to take these courses as a first step into becoming art school tutors themselves. The Dip.AD and later the BA (Hons) were generally regarded as a satisfactory terminal qualification for graduates wanting to become professional artists and designers, though it was generally recognised that both the Royal College of Art and the Slade offered networking facilities that could fast-track success. The London colleges offered a special cachet as well. In the 90's, art schools having merged into polytechnics and the polytechnics becoming universities themselves in 1992, the number of MA courses mushroomed and fine art PhDs began to emerge. The ability to offer a doctorate was seen as offering real university status. Arguments emerged over the nature of fine art PhDs and the arguments are still going on. My university, like the majority of others, does not exempt the fine art PhD from writing a dissertation but recognising the importance of 'practice' to the fine artist allows a reduction of the length requirement from 80,000 to 40,000 words. Mercifully it does not define the necessary content of the thesis except to say: "The PhD shall be awarded to ... a candidate who, having produced published work, artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it within its academic context resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners."¹¹

Mercifully again, the university is fairly flexible over who can be accepted as examiners and does not necessarily expect them to have PhDs themselves. The logic of the situation is fairly straightforward. Candidates presenting themselves for PhDs are not being rewarded for their work as artists but as artists aspiring to become academics. Some people argue that asking for a thesis is an unjustifiable demand or that it is not fair, being a so-called 'double-whammy' as artists don't have to be experts at written communication to function effectively as artists. I do believe, however, that, certainly in the UK, this view is misguided.

Chemistry graduates do not have to obtain PhDs to become practicing chemists; they have to obtain PhDs to become research chemists, either in industry or university. History graduates do not have to obtain PhDs to become historians though in universities the PhD is the measurable level of attainment for a graduate to teach the subject; the same is true for all of the other 'academic' subjects. The PhD is simply a requirement for getting a job in a university.

There is a double reason for the emergence of PhDs in fine art. First, the changes brought about by the decline of modernism and the current role of 'theory' in fine art practices. From 1968, few artists in education could afford to be naïve in relation to ideology. Herbert Marcuse

believed that students and women could become the prime movers in social change because of their alienation from the dominant economic structures. Radicalism emerged as a deep requirement of interesting artistic practice and as ideology has to be articulated verbally to become recognised. Grunt practice garnered no respect. More recently, post modern irony is not obviously recognisable from the object itself. If, as Arthur Danto argued, Warhol's *Brillo Box* represented the philosophical end of art, it took Danto himself to point that out. Whether an image is a Baudrillardian *simulacrum* or an ironised reflection of its effect again is not obvious. One of my photography students caused an uproar by exhibiting visual bites of pornographic images along with decontextualised quotes from an antipornographic feminist writer. He fiercely argued that his work was *about* pornography but his fellow students would not let him off without a debate. In this context, prospective fine art tutors need to develop some sophistication over the debates that surround practice. The second reason is less healthy.

The bureaucratisation process has led to a situation where artists have to explain themselves in order to gain institutional funding. The emergence of the Arts and Humanities Research Board in the UK means that in order to gain grants they have to demonstrate that they are engaged in "research" and this is defined in the following way:

How does the Board define research?

1. The Board's definition of research is primarily concerned with the definition of research processes, rather than outcomes. This definition is built around three key features and your application must fully address all of these in order to be considered eligible for support:

- it must define a series of *research questions* or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions or problems to be addressed.
- it must specify a *research context* for the questions or problems to be addressed. You must specify why it is important that these particular questions or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution this particular project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area
- it must specify the *research methods* for addressing and answering the research questions or problems. You must state how, in the course of the research project, you will seek to answer the questions, or advance available knowledge and understanding of the problems. You should also explain the rationale for your chosen research methods and why you think

they provide the most appropriate means by which to answer the research questions.

2. This definition of research provides a distinction between research and practice *per se*. Creative output can be produced, or practice undertaken, as an integral part of a research process as defined above. *Equally, creativity or practice may involve no such process at all, in which case they would be ineligible for funding from the Board.* [My emphasis]

3. The Board's primary concern is to ensure that the research it funds will address clearly-articulated research questions or problems, set in a clear research context, and using appropriate research methods. The precise nature of the outcomes of the research may vary considerably, and may include, for example, performances, films or broadcasts; exhibitions; monographs, editions or articles; or electronic data, including sound or images. Teaching materials may also be an appropriate outcome from a research project as defined above.⁽²⁾

This paragraph must be read in the context of understanding that the paradigms for understanding research are drawn from the humanities and that no applications that do not apply the paradigms will, in the face of fierce competition, be successful. There's no money for practitioners and only money for academics. While money is available to enable history academics to practice as historians and, through a different Research Board, chemistry academics to practice as chemists, there is no money available for fine art academics to practice as fine artists.

Ironically, the government's Research Assessment Exercise has allowed greater freedoms to artists in academia to practice as artists because their work is peer-reviewed by fellow artists and the intrusion of alien academics has been fiercely resisted. The RAE helpfully declared: "The definition of research which applies in the exercise is: 'Research' for the purpose of the RAE is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship*; *the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights* [my emphasis]; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and analysis of materials, components and processes, e.g. for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research."⁽³⁾

Artists were invited to write a 300 word description of their work where its "research imperative" was not clear and a browse through the Art and Design returns⁽⁴⁾ reveals the degree of variety that was possible. Having reported the good news, the majority of Art & Design having scored fundable 3a's which means a significant and usable income, now is the time to report the bad. A combination of the government's White Paper on Higher Education⁽⁵⁾, the Roberts Report "review of Research Assessment"⁽⁶⁾ and the Higher Education Funding Council's report "Improving standards in post-graduate research degree programmes"⁽⁷⁾ would result, if implemented, in a dire setback to the UK fine art PhD and research in Art & Design.

If the government gets its way there will be a distinction between 'research led' and 'teaching' universities. The post 1992 universities, the old polytechnics that included art schools, are destined to become 'teaching only' universities. No HEFC money would be made available to allow staff to actively engage in research; all they need to do is to engage in 'scholarship', ie. keep up with what other people are doing. The Roberts Report will require PhD supervisors to be active researchers and to gain quality approval there must be a minimum standard for critical mass of at least five research active staff or post-doctoral researchers and ten research students." But, of course, if fine art staff are not allowed to become active researchers there is no way in which they will be allowed to supervise PhD students. While the small minority of institutions that scored a minimum of 5 in the last RAE⁽⁸⁾ will be allowed to supervise PhD's, at least one will be ruled out on the grounds that RAE income is less than 2% of HEFC teaching income. And where will the lucky PhD graduates go on to teach? At institutions that are not allowed to award PhDs because staff are not allowed to actively engage in research for the RAE. Staff who are lucky enough to gain AHRB awards will have done so by playing the academic game and submit themselves to humanities' paradigms for research. This will mean that artistic practice as such will be discouraged in the teaching universities, QED.

In my experience, fine art tutors have been fairly clever at creating space for themselves within bureaucratic institutions. But with an increased emphasis on financial and academic accountability the space is quickly evaporating. One possible scenario for the future is independently financed art schools, but they will become the option for a privileged few. This is highly ironical since government policy declares the importance of "access" for the socially excluded.

Notes

1. <http://www.ntu.ac.uk/registry/publications/unihandbook/section4.pdf>
2. http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/ahrb/website/images/4_91249.doc
3. <http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/PanGuide/Guide/guideann.htm>
4. http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/rae_dynamic.cfm?myURL=http://195.194.167.103/submissions/Inst.asp?UoA=64
5. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hestragy/foreword.shtml>
6. <http://www.ra-review.ac.uk/reports/roberts.asp>
7. http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2003/03_23.htm
8. http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae/rae_dynamic.cfm?myURL=http://195.194.167.103/Results/byuoa/uoa64.htm